

Message Text

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51

ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 ORM-03 SR-02 AID-20 SSO-00 OMB-01

ABF-01 TRSE-00 AF-10 ARA-16 EA-11 EUR-25 RSC-01

INRE-00 IOE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /196 W
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O 121426Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5610

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS BEIRUT 14122

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, SREF, UNRWA, US

SUBJECT: UNRWA CASH CRISIS

REF: USUN 5552

1. RE REFTEL, WE QUERIED UNRWA COMPTROLLER CALLOW WHO TOLD US AGENCY TRADITIONALLY PAYS DECEMBER SALARIES TO ITS 14,500 CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM EMPLOYEES PRIOR TO CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS, RATHER THAN AT END OF MONTH(UNRWA'S NORMAL PRACTICE DURING REST OF YEAR). THIS YEAR, HOWEVER, UNRWA'S CASH POSITION--WHICH USUALLY BECOMES TIGHTEST IN EARLY JANUARY--HAD WORSENERD EARLIER THAN EXPECTED DUE TO NON-PAYMENT OF ANTICIPATED CASH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM GOVTS MENTIONED PARA 1(B) REFTEL, MOST OF WHOM IN PAST HAD TRANSFERRED FUNDS TO AGENCY IN EARLY DECEMBER. UNRWA HAS BEEN DOING UTMOST PERSUADE THEM DO LIKEWISE THIS YEAR, BUT BY DEC 11 HAD HAD NO SUCCESS AND THUS WAS OBLIGED REQUEST HELP FROM UN, UNRWA LIAISON OFFICE IN NEW YORK, AND USG. AGENCY'S PAYROLL MACHINERY IS SUCH THAT DEC 15 IS LATEST DATE ON WHICH CASH RECEIVED COULD BE CRANKED INTO PRE-CHRISTMAS PAY ENVELOPES.

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2. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE WERE AWARE THAT UNRWA, AS USUAL,

WAS OPERATING ON FINANCIAL SHOESTRING, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO CASH BALANCES, AT YEAR'S END, WE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT SITUATION HAD TAKEN SUCH TURN FOR WORSE AND THAT CALLOW--WHO USUALLY KEEPS US MINUTELY INFORMED--HAD NOT MENTIONED IT TO US. CAN ONLY SURMISE THAT HE WAITED TOO LONG FOR ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTIONS TO SHOW UP, AND THEN HAD TO RESORT TO LAST-MINUTE APPEAL QUOTED REFTEL. CALLOW GRATEFUL FOR NEWS OF EARLIER-THAN-USUAL US CASH PAYMENT (EVEN THOUGH IT WILL NOT RPT NOT HELP MEET PRE-CHRISTMAS PAYROLL), NOTING THAT HE HAS STILL TO RECEIVE ANY WORD IN RESPONSE TO HIS APPEAL FROM OTHER GOVTS OR FROM UN. BUFFUM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BUDGETS, FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BEIRUT14122
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731230/aaaaavza.tel
Line Count: 72
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: USUN 5552
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05-Nov-2001 by williad>; APPROVED <07 FEB 2002 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UNRWA CASH CRISIS
TAGS: EAID, SREF, US, UNRWA
To: STATE USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005